

§ 784.101 The section 13(b)(4) exemption.

Section 13(b)(4) grants an exemption only from the overtime requirements of the Act and applies to "any employee employed in the canning, processing, marketing, freezing, curing, storing, packing for shipment, or distributing of any kind of fish shellfish, or other aquatic forms of animal or vegetable life, or any byproduct thereof."

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF EXEMPTIONS

§ 784.102 General legislative history.

(a) As originally enacted in 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act provided an exemption from both the minimum wage requirements of section 6 and the overtime pay requirements of section 7 which was made applicable to "any employee employed in the catching, taking, harvesting, cultivating, or farming of any kind of fish, shellfish, crustacea, sponges, seaweeds or other aquatic forms of animal and vegetable life, including the going to and returning from work and including employment in the loading, unloading, or packing of such products for shipment or in propagating, processing, marketing, freezing, canning, curing, storing, or distributing the above products or by products thereof" (52 Stat. 1060, sec. 13(a)(5)).

(b) In 1949 the minimum wage was extended to employees employed in canning such products by deleting the word "canning" from the above exemption, adding the parenthetical phrase "(other than canning)" after the word "processing" therein, and providing a new exemption in section 13(b)(4), from overtime pay provisions only, applicable to "any employee employed in the canning of any kind of fish, shellfish, or other aquatic forms of animal or vegetable life, or any byproduct thereof". All other employees included in the original minimum wage and overtime exemption remained within it (63 Stat. 910).

(c) By the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1961, both these exemptions were further revised to read as set forth in §§ 784.100 and 784.101. The effect of this change was to provide a means of equalizing the application of

the Act as between canning employees and employees employed in other processing, marketing, and distributing of aquatic products on shore, to whom minimum wage protection, formerly provided only for canning employees, was extended by this action. The 1961 amendments, however, left employees employed in fishing, in fish farming, and in related occupations concerned with procurement of aquatic products from nature, under the existing exemption from minimum wages as well as overtime pay.

§ 784.103 Adoption of the exemption in the original 1938 Act.

Although in the course of consideration of the legislation in Congress before passage in 1938, provisions to exempt employment in fisheries and aquatic products activities took various forms, section 13(a)(5), as drafted by the conference committee and finally approved, followed the language of an amendment adopted during consideration of the bill by the House of Representatives on May 24, 1938, which was proposed by Congressman Bland of Virginia. He had earlier on the same day, offered an amendment which had as its objective the exemption of the "fishery industry," broadly defined. The amendment had been defeated (83 Cong. Rec. 7408), as had an amendment subsequently offered by Congressman Mott of Oregon (to a pending amendment proposed by Congressman Coffee of Nebraska) which would have provided an exemption for "industries engaged in producing, processing, distributing, or handling * * * fishery or seafood products which are seasonal or perishable" (83 Cong. Rec. 7421-7423). Against this background, when Congressman Bland offered his amendment which ultimately became section 13(a)(5) of the Act he took pains to explain: "This amendment is not the same. In the last amendment I was trying to define the fishery industry. I am now dealing with those persons who are exempt, and I call the attention of the Committee to the language with respect to the employment of persons in agriculture * * * I am only asking for the seafood and fishery industry that which has been done for agriculture." It was after this explanation that the

amendment was adopted (83 Cong. Rec. 7443). When the conference committee included in the final legislation this provision from the House bill, it omitted from the bill another House provision granting an hours exemption for employees “in any place of employment” where the employer was “engaged in the processing of or in canning fresh fish or fresh seafood” and the provision of the Senate bill providing an hours exemption for employees “employed in connection with” the canning or other packing of fish, etc. (see *Mitchell v. Stinson*, 217 F. 2d 210; *McComb v. Consolidated Fisheries*, 75 F. Supp. 798). The indication in this legislative history that the exemption in its final form was intended to depend upon the employment of the particular employee in the specified activities is in accord with the position of the Department of Labor and the weight of judicial authority.

§ 784.104 The 1949 amendments.

In deleting employees employed in canning aquatic products from the section 13(a)(5) exemption and providing them with an exemption in like language from the overtime provisions only in section 13(b)(4), the conferees on the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1949 did not indicate any intention to change in any way the category of employees who would be exempt as “employed in the canning of” the aquatic products. As the Supreme Court has pointed out in a number of decisions, “When Congress amended the Act in 1949 it provided that pre-1949 rulings and interpretations by the Administrator should remain in effect unless inconsistent with the statute as amended 63 Stat. 920” (*Mitchell v. Kentucky Finance Co.*, 359 U.S. 290). In connection with this exemption the conference report specifically indicates what operations are included in the canning process (see § 784.142). In a case decided before the 1961 amendments to the Act, this was held to “indicate that Congress intended that only those employees engaged in operations physically essential in the canning of fish, such as cutting the fish, placing it in cans, labelling and packing the cans for shipment are in the exempt category” (*Mitchell v. Stinson*, 217 F. 2d 210).

§ 784.105 The 1961 amendments.

(a) The statement of the Managers on the Part of the House in the conference report on the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1961 (H. Rept. No. 327, 87th Cong., first session, p. 16) refers to the fact that the changes made in sections 13(a)(5) and 13(b)(4) originated in the Senate amendment to the House bill and were not in the bill as passed by the House. In describing the Senate provision which was retained in the final legislation, the Managers stated that it “changes the exemption in the act for” the operations transferred to section 13(b)(4) from section 13(a)(5) “from a minimum wage and overtime exemption to an overtime only exemption.” They further stated: “The present complete exemption is retained for employees employed in catching, propagating, taking, harvesting, cultivating, or farming fish and certain other marine products, or in the first processing, canning, or packing such marine products at sea as an incident to, or in conjunction with, such fishing operations, including the going to and returning from work and loading and unloading when performed by such an employee.” In the report of the Senate committee on the provision included in the Senate bill (S. Rept. No. 145, 87th Cong., first session, p. 33), the committee stated: “The bill would modify the minimum wage and overtime exemption in section 13(a)(5) of the Act for employees engaged in fishing and in specified activities on aquatic products.” In further explanation, the report states that the bill would amend this section “to remove from this exemption those so-called on-shore activities and leave the exemption applicable to ‘offshore’ activities connected with the procurement of the aquatic products, including first processing, canning, or packing at sea performed as an incident to fishing operations, as well as employment in loading and unloading such products for shipment when performed by any employee engaged in these procurement operations.” It is further stated in the report that “persons who are employed